A. THE CHEMICAL INDUSTRY

381 Though the chemical industry of Rumania ranks lowest among the chief industries on the basis of production value, it is better and more comprehensively developed than in the other south-east European countries. Production is chiefly confined to heavy chemicals manufactured largely from indigenous raw materials. Most of the factories are situated in Valachia, Transylvania, and around Timişoara in the Banat.

1. Acids and Alkalis

●385 317 Rumania produced annually 45,000 metric tons of sulphuric acid, which was sufficient to cover the pre-war requirements of the country, which were mostly for the refining of mineral oil. The manufacture was in the hands of some six firms, of which the chief producer was the Mărăşeşti S.A.R., with plants at Mărăşeşti, Valea Călugăreasca and Braşov. Three of the smaller plants producing sulphuric acid with a total annual capacity of 18,000 tons, representing 35 per cent. of the total, were acquired by Hungary. The necessary sulphur was obtained from Rumanian pyrites mines located at Baia Mare and Baia Sprie in N. Transylvania, acquired by Hungary in 1940. Since that date supplies have been derived from Fundul Moldovei, Zam, Sacaramb and Altan Tepe, though not in sufficient quantities to cover requirements. Shortage of sulphuric acid has been partly eased by imports from Italy.

The alkali production is normally sufficient to yield a surplus for export. Rock salt, of which there is an important domestic production, forms the basis of the alkali industry.

Salt Production

	metric tons
1939	374,000
1940	323,000
1941*	267,000

* Reduced 1941 production is due to loss of salt mines to Hungary at Ocna Sugatag, Ocna Dejului and elsewhere.

385 Soda ash is made solely by the Solvay Company at Ocna-Mureşului, where the annual capacity of the plant is estimated at 50,000 metric tons. Caustic soda is made by the Solvay Company and by S. A. Nitrogen at Dicio Sân Martin. Production of alkali in 1939 and 1942 (estimated) was :—

	1939	1942
Soda ash ..	38,000	40,000
Caustic soda ..	11,800	15,000

Requirements of hydrochloric acid were about 3,000 to 3,500 metric tons a year, and were completely met by home production. Production of sodium sulphate, a by-product in the manufacture of hydrochloric acid, amounted to 2,650 metric tons in 1939.

The most important sulphate made in Rumania before the war was that of copper, production of which averaged 5,700 metric tons between 1933 and 1936, increasing to 12,400 tons in 1937. The chief producers were the Mărăşeşti and the Phœnix chemical works (the latter in ceded territory).

[439] There is at present an acute shortage of copper sulphate, the loss of which as a fungicide is particularly felt. Germany is reported to have supplied small quantities in return for exports of copper scrap.

2. Fertilisers

387 Since the consumption of chemical fertilisers in Rumania is one of the lowest among the European countries, their production is comparatively small.

Synthetic nitrogen compounds are manufactured by the S.A. Nitrogen at Dicio San Martin, where the company has a small Fauser synthetic ammonia plant and a calcium cyanamide works. No recent reliable data exists regarding output, but before the war the Fauser plant is stated to have treated 200 metric tons of nitrogen annually, and the production of cyanamide amounted to about 500 metric tons. The quantity of superphosphate manufactured averaged about 8,000 tons before the war. Owing to the cutting-off of supplies of rock phosphate, production of superphosphate is now probably nil. There was no domestic production of potash salts, and pre-war imports were very small.

3. Wood-Distillation Products

314 385 This industry is almost entirely controlled by Margina Reşita destilariile de lemn unite S.A.R., Timişoara. Prior to the outbreak of the war about 170,000 tons of beech wood were worked per year. The following is a list of some of the products obtained, showing the average annual tonnage produced :—

Wood charcoal	31,000
Methanol	2,000
Calcium acetate	1,400
Acetic acid	50
Formaldehyde	130
Acetone and derivatives ..	1,100

4. Soap and Glycerine

388 389 Rumania is an important producer of sunflower, rape and pumpkin seeds, and has, therefore, an ample supply of oil for her soap industry. The production of soap amounts to 33,000 tons and is in the hands of several factories, the only one of which is of striking importance being Stella S.A. of Bucarest. Glycerine production, which is a by-product of the soap industry, amounted to 350 tons, most of which was utilised by the explosives industry. Since the war the quality of the soap has markedly deteriorated. Though the present ration of 250 grams per head per month is a fairly generous one, it is not fully met and distribution is very bad. The production of glycerine is estimated to have fallen to about 200 tons, while imports amounted to 160 tons in 1941 compared with an average of about 240 tons in 1936-1938.

5. Paints and Varnish

386 The paint and varnish industry, in which some 60 small firms are engaged, is sufficiently well developed to meet—under normal conditions—the greater part of Rumanian requirements in this particular sphere. The industry is, however, still dependent to some extent on imports of oil paints.

6. Pharmaceuticals

278 Production of pharmaceuticals is on a very small scale, being sufficient to meet only about one-third of requirements, the remainder being covered by imports, mainly from Germany.

7. Explosives

339 The explosives industry is quite inadequate to cover wartime requirements, and these have to be